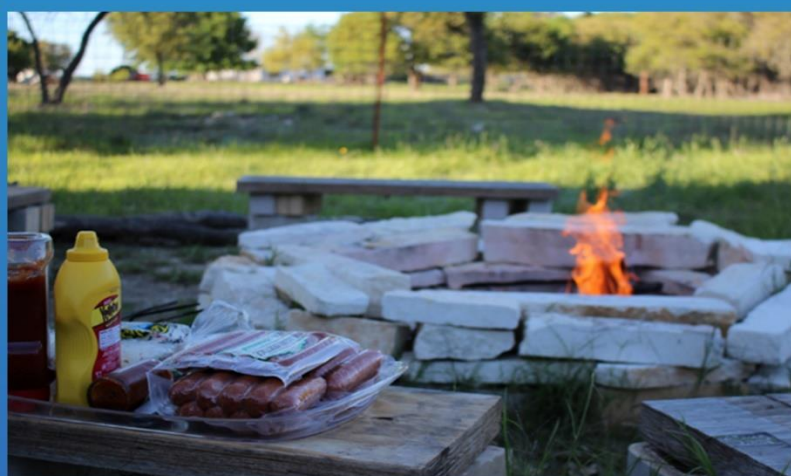




35 EASY *DIY* PROJECTS

To Upgrade Your Home and Homestead on a Budget



35 EASY PROJECTS TO UPGRADE YOUR HOME AND HOMESTEAD ON A BUDGET

James Walton

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INTRODUCTION

Are you as hungry as I am for a massive dose of self-reliance and independence? We are not alone, ya know. There is a wave of people all over this nation who are being called to move away from consumerism into a simple, sustainable lifestyle.

Get ready to tackle 35 Easy Projects to Upgrade Your Home and Homestead on a Budget!

We have a few goals here:

Goal #1 Push you closer to self sufficiency

Goal #2 Provide great instruction and outcomes

Goal #3 Keep the budget low

Thank you for joining us on this journey. Let's not waste another second and get started.

TOOLS FOR EASY PROJECTS

These DIY projects are going to spread from the chicken coop to the workbench and even to the dining room table. So, as you can imagine you are going to want to have a variety of tools to help you along the way.

At the very least have access to the tools mentioned below. You might need, or know of, different tools that could make the job go quicker. These are just bare minimum recommendations.

In the Garden:

- Spade
- Hand Shovel
- Hand Trimmers
- Hacksaw
- Hand Saw or Miter
- Basic Toolset

Security:

- Basic Toolset
- Needle Nose Pliers
- Any Form of Adhesive
- Electronic Data Storage i.e. micro SD cards

Kitchen:

- Mixing Bowl
- Spray Bottles
- Whisk
- Basic Toolset
- Hand Saw

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- Table Saw
- Mason Jars

Pantry:

- Cutting Board
- Chef's Knife
- Paring Knife
- Mason Jars

Budget Homestead Maintenance:

- Hand Saw
- Table Saw
- Post Hole Digger
- Miter Saw
- Sandpaper
- Sander
- Paint Brushes

Hobbies and Crafts:

- Large Basin
- Double Boiler
- Small Pot
- Small Sewing Kit
- Shears
- Terrine or Soap Mold
- Large Kitchen Knife

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Outdoor Projects

See Homestead Maintenance

BREAKING DOWN A PALLET FOR USABLE PARTS

We have a lot of projects in this book that are going to require pallet wood. We have some that will require wood in general. If we are going to keep a tight budget on these, we should be sourcing free wood whenever possible. We can do that by using free wood.

Pallets are an excellent source of free wood if you know how to process them. Pallets are nailed together, and you can remove those nails in two ways.

Pry Bar Method

By using a simple pry bar, you can start removing the nails from each board. Be sure to remove all the nails from one board before moving on to the next one. This will give you access to all the nails in the next board.

You must take your time with this method. If you go in there like a madman, you will likely damage the wood and then we will have problems. You want nice planks that can be cut to size or used in another way. If they are split, then they will not be usable.



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Reciprocating Saw Method

The reciprocating saw is a tremendous tool and it can be used to break down pallets. You will need a specific type of blade to use this method. There are four different types of blades that can be used. You are going to purchase the bi metal blade.

Using your reciprocating saw you can simply cut the nails that are attaching the boards to the braces. These will cut away pretty easy and you will have no effect on the wood by prying. This requires much less effort also.

You decide which method you will use to break down your pallets.



CHAPTER 1: GARDENING AND LIVESTOCK

A simple garden and chicken coop can have a profound effect on your daily life. You don't need to commit to a massive space to create lots of food for you and your family. You might also be surprised to find out that many suburban and even urban areas have laws that permit the keeping of chickens.

It will take about 6-10 hens to make enough eggs for your family on a regular basis. There is a great liberation to keeping chickens. It takes your whole journey towards self-reliance and independence to another level. It is just a perfect addition to gardening.

The garden itself is just as important. You can create a variety of food sources in your garden. Starchy potatoes are easy to grow, nutritious greens are also simple to grow year over year. Maybe add some nut and fruit trees and start exploring native plants and you will have a grip on food production in your backyard!

PALLET COMPOST BIN



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Every year when the weather breaks people head up to the local hardware store to buy bags of topsoil. They are filling up raised beds and planting in pots. They need this topsoil because it has better nutrients than the clay-based dirt they probably have outside their own home.

The interesting thing about this issue is that we also spend weekends bagging up our leaves and shipping them off via trash collection. We do the same with our grass clippings. Of course, these two things combined with some water, stirring and some table scraps will create a very impressive compost pile that can be used to fill your raised beds or amend your soil.

You will need a place to contain this compost while it's in process. So, we have a quick DIY build for you. This is the easy 5 pallet compost build that will allow you to start some compost in one section and then finish another one in your other stall.

You will need:

- 5 Pallets
- 3-12 ft 2X4s
- Hammer
- Nails

Saw of your choice. Miter would be best.

You don't have to do any breakdown of pallets for this build so that is pretty cool. The only thing you will have to do is cut your 2X4 into a few different sections.

Line up 3 of your pallets, width wise, so that your overlaying boards on the pallets are running perpendicular to the ground.

Measure your 12 ft board so that it runs the full length of the pallets. Cut what is not needed and hammer your 2X4 into the center of your three lined up pallets. The board should run the length of all three side by side. This piece will be used to secure the three together. If you wanted, you could use two boards of the same length, but one has done me just fine.

Next, using nails, you can hammer the two side pallets on. Be sure they are widthwise as well or else the bin will not sit properly. This step is better done with two people.

Once you have attached pallets on either side of the three back wall pallets, you should have something that looks like an E without the center line.

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You can now add the center line by attaching with nails. I do this and nail in smaller pieces of lumber at the inside corners of your bins. These can be cut straight or cut at 45-degree angles to look tighter. Either way this will add stability to that center pallet and the build on a whole.

Now, you should have two bins. One bin you can start compost in today, turn it often. The other you can start a new batch in a week or two and you will always have some of that great compost cooking.

Stop wasting those leaves, scraps and grass clippings. They are plant food in the making!

NATIVE PLANTS

Food is always an important part of the homesteader's day/week/life in general. You find yourself growing food, canning food, hunting food, raising food and sourcing the best food you can for you and yours.

Whether you are upgrading your home or homestead, food upgrades should be high on that list.

Well, the garden is a big deal and the raising of chickens is another way to gain access to great foods. However, you might also be surrounded by great foods, too! Native plants that are growing all around you

Let's look at several types of plants that could be used at home for food and medicine but are available in your backyard, neighborhood or community.

DANDELION

The humble dandelion is something that you see each and every spring. You might even be the type of person that just runs it over year over year with your lawn mower! For a long time, it has been known as a weed.

The leaves of the dandelion plant are a delicious salad green when they are young. They have a slight bitter taste that is great with tangy dressings.

The flowers can be used to make tasty dandelion bread and the roots can be roasted to create a bitter drink that is reminiscent of coffee. However, there is no caffeine. All that use and we just run them over with our lawn mower!



PAW PAW

There is a good chance you have walked by a paw paw tree, maybe even seen the fruit, but had no idea what it was. These oblong fruits that ripen in the end of summer are delicious and something like a cross between a mango and a banana.



The paw paw tree is an exotic and its northernmost growing exotic fruit in the nation. Get to know this great tree and collect the sweet fruits, which grow near water sources, to store or eat fresh.

MULBERRY

Mulberry trees offer up lots of small fruits that have great flavor. The bush is identified by the variety of leaf shapes from mitten shaped to simple toothed shapes.

In the late spring - early summer these fruits ripen up and begin falling.



They can be enjoyed fresh or turned to jam.

BLACKBERRY

When you are walking through the woods and you hit a patch of sticker bushes there is a good chance you are walking through blackberry bushes.

Blackberry patches put out plenty of fruit and if you can get to them before the birds and squirrels you will enjoy those plump ripe fruits.



If you have these brambles on your property you could cover them with netting to protect the fruit from the birds.

CATTAILS



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Down by the water we have all walked past a bunch of cattails. These are the foragers best friends. The tops can be eaten or used as fire tinder. You can eat the young shoots raw or cooked. The starchy roots of the cattail can be cooked and mashed as a filling food.

They do contain inulin which might affect your digestion if you eat too much.

COMMON PLANTAIN

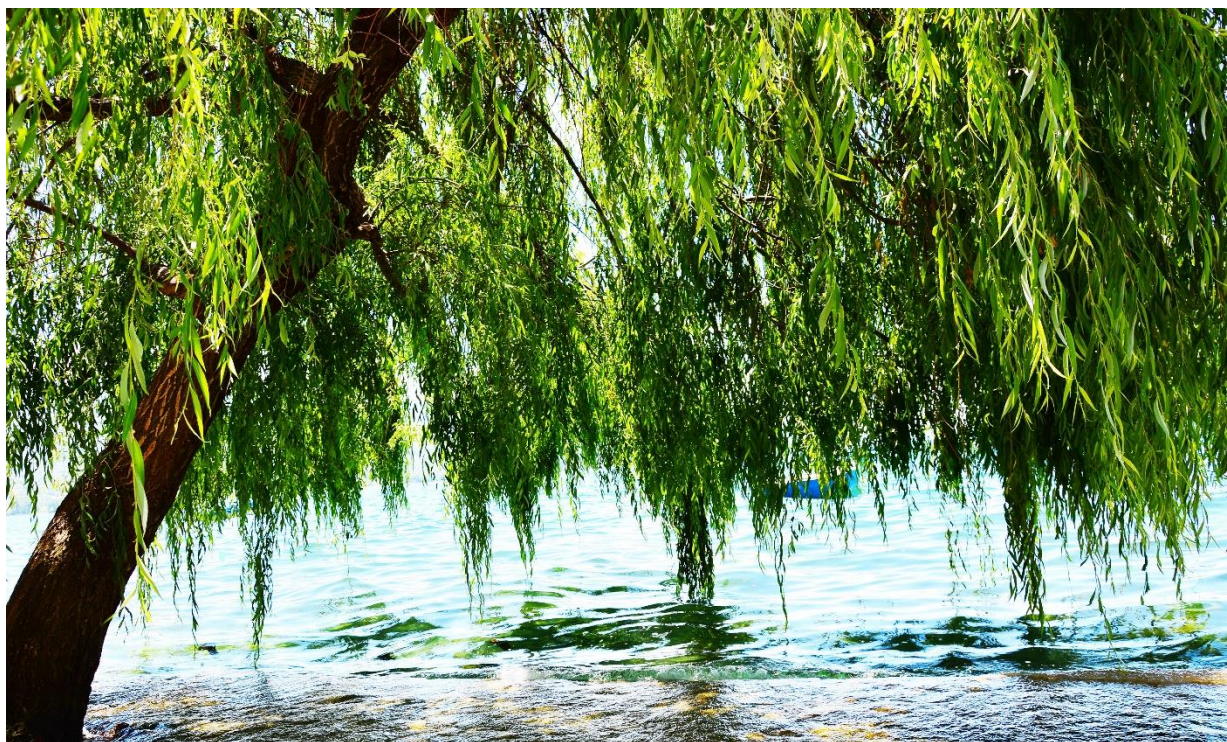


The plantain is great for healing wounds and the young leaves are great in salads. You have this plant growing in your yard right now!

The mature leaves are great if sautéed.

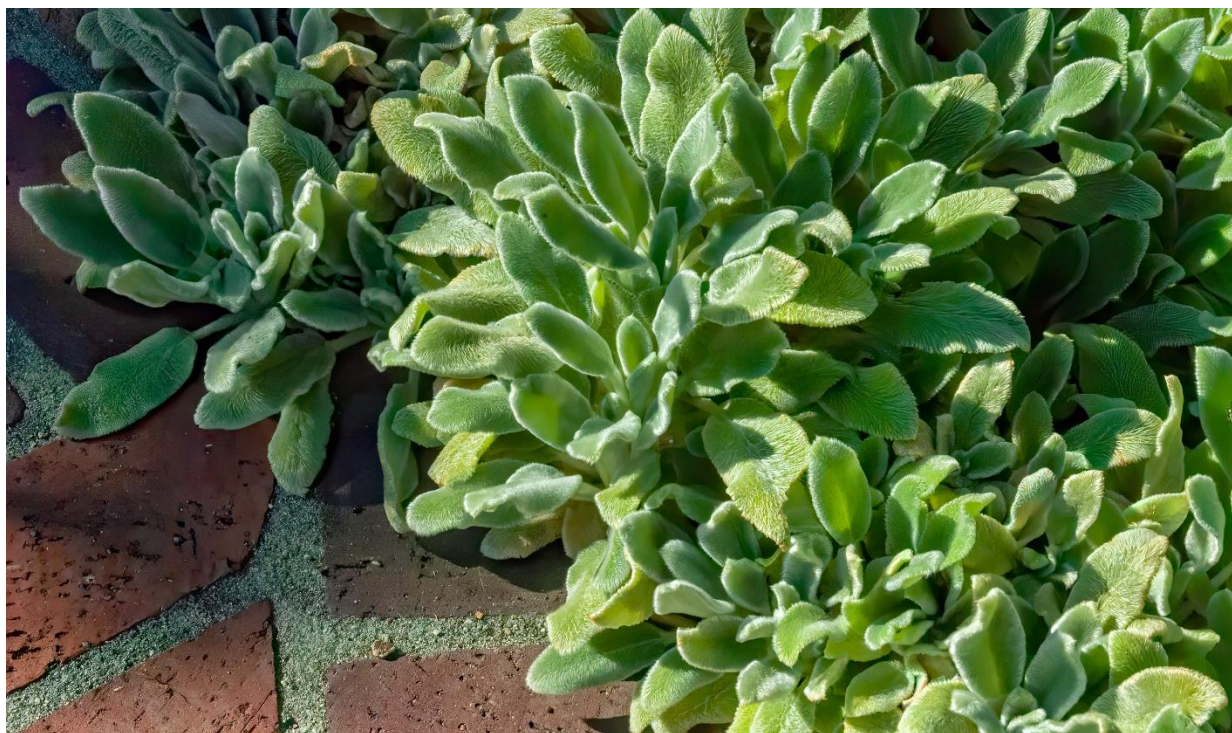
WHITE WILLOW

A standby in the foragers medicine cabinet, white willow bark can be used as to deal with fever and pain. You can create a decoction of the bark and drink it to lower fever or to deal with pain. The bark contains salicylic acid or the same active ingredient in aspirin.



LAMB'S EAR

This soft and fuzzy ground plant is easy to identify. It is one of the best plants to use as a wild bandage or even as a tissue or something to clean your body with.



Lamb's ear is a great wild plant to use because you can easily find it due to its soft and fuzzy look and feel.

RAIN COLLECTION



Whether you are planning on catching water for gardening or for washing, drinking or all the above, there is plenty of it up there! The big question is how do you utilize it and what do you need to make this work?

The most affordable and easy to use rain collection system is the rain barrel. These can be outfitted with a simple spigot or you can go a step further. In this DIY build we will talk about how you create a simple and affordable DIY rain barrel that can be attached to your gutters.

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You Will Need:

- 55 Gallon Barrels
- Two Spigots and Attachments
- 1 Filter Basket
- 1 1/8 Inch Spade Bit
- Window Screen

Before anything you should make sure that your barrel is cleaned out thoroughly. The most sturdy and affordable barrels are the food grade barrels. The cheapest are the thinner blue plastic barrels. You decide which you want to use but clean them out first.

You will cut three holes in the barrel to begin. The lower and higher spigot holes will be cut using your 1 1/8 in spade bit. Attach your high spigot and your low spigot into these holes. This will be how you get water out of your rain barrel.

Fill your bucket up with a hose to assure the bucket and spigots are watertight.

The hole you cut in the top will be determined by the size of the filter basket. You want the filter basket to fit into that hole and be held in place by the rim. First you will cut a nice sheet of the window screen and fold the screen around the outside of the filter basket. Trim the excess and then lay the basket into the hole.

Finally, you will have to cut your gutter and add a plastic extension to fit down into the filter basket.

You could also include a diverter if you want the water to go to another place when the rain barrel is full. These can be amazingly effective for multi barrel systems.

PVC CHICKEN FEEDERS



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Feeding your little egg factories can happen a number of ways. There are hanging feeders that can be filled up and left for the chickens to peck at when they desire it. There are also feeders that sit right on the ground.

These feeders can be expensive and cost over \$30 depending on the size of the feeder you need.

We are going to look at how to make a simple PVC feeder that can be filled up while you stand outside the coop or run while keeping the food safe and off the ground.

You Will Need:

- Hacksaw
- Pipe Cement
- Zip Ties
- 1 6ft Length of 3 Inch PVC Pipe
- 2 - 3 Inch 90 Degree Hub and Hub Elbows
- Two PVC caps

Begin by cutting your PVC pipe in half. This will give you two 3ft lengths. This will make the base of your PVC chicken feeder.

Using your pipe cement, attach 1 elbow to each length of pipe. This pipe and elbow should be left to dry for about an hour before moving on.

Next you can decide where you would like to insert the two new feeders. These can be slid into a run or even installed down into the coop itself. Fence posts and fencing are two great places to hang your new creations. Identify your location before moving onto the next step.

These need to be hung at an angle because if they are perpendicular to the ground the food will just spill out. So, tilt them back slightly and you will have an effective feeder.

Using your zip ties, you can affix your new feeder to a fence post or fencing. If you want to install these inside your coop it might take some brackets and screws but it's still a relatively easy install. These can feed into a smaller bowl or the curve of the pipe can touch the ground.

Once you have your pipe feeders securely in place you can fill them with food and place your caps on. Do not glue these caps on or you will never be able to fill the pipes again. When you

dump the food in it will start to spill out of the bottom at first but the more you fill each pipe the opening will not spill anymore food.

TIP: If your feeders are outside the coop you should consider covering the feeding opening during heavy rain. The feed can get moist and gum up the pipe. Inside the coop or under some sort of simple cover this will not happen.

PVC GRID WATERING SYSTEM

A movable PVC watering grid can make gardening much easier. These can be moved from bed to bed to fruit tree to row crops. These grids can be made of varying sizes and are light and easy to carry. They can be hooked up to hoses and they can be hooked up to rain barrels.

An incredible little tool for backyard or homestead gardening the PVC watering grid can also be customized to almost any size. Let's look at a base build for your own.

You Will Need:

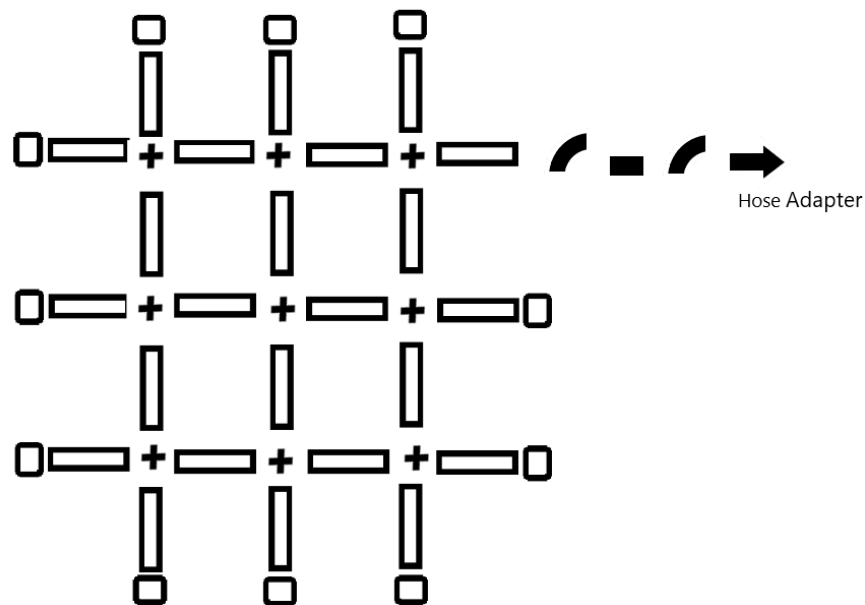
- Hacksaw
- Pipe Glue
- 24 4 Inch Pieces of 1 Inch Diameter PVC
- 11 1 Inch PVC Caps
- 9 Four Way PVC Fittings
- 2 1 Inch 90 Degree PVC Elbows
- 2 1 Inch Segments of PVC Cut 2 Inches in Length
- One PVC Hose Adapter

The best way to get all your pieces of PVC will be to purchase an 8-foot segment of pipe to break down and a smaller length for the pieces between your elbow attachments and any cutting or measuring mistakes.

Cut all your pieces of PVC before starting the build. This will assure you have everything you need.

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In your backyard or a shed layout all the pieces in order to create the grid. Lay them out just as they will appear in grid format. Do not put on any caps or stick any PVC into the four-way fittings. Just lay everything out and look it over. It should look like this.



Once you are sure all your pieces are there, and the grid can be completed you can start using pipe glue and assembling the pieces. If your grid was laid out properly you should have no problem assembling it.

Let the glue set for about an hour and then drill 3-4 holes in each section of PVC pipe. That is that!

DIY POTATO GROWING BED



Any homesteader who spends time gardening should be able to grow potatoes. These are some of the most important foods to grow because they are starchy, high calorie foods that taste great and can be prepared in a number of ways.

If you are looking to maximize your growing area, you can grow up instead of out. Potatoes are a great plant to use for growing up. Making a simple DIY Potato Growing Bed will allow you to do just that. These are remarkably simple to make and can be done using scrap wood if you have some around. For this version you will need the following items.

- 6 2X6 Boards 8ft Long
- 1 2X2 Board 12ft Long
- A Bunch of 2 1/2 Inch Screws (100 will do)

Cut your 2X2 into four 33-inch lengths. These will be the four corners of your potato growing bed. They will be your frame and you will screw your base into these.

Cut 4 of your 2X6s into 12 lengths of 21 inches and the next 4 into 12 lengths of 24 inches.

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Start the build by screwing in two of your 24-inch 2X6s to two each of the 2x2 posts. Then combine them by screwing the two 21-inch 2X6s to create your first layer. At this point you should have the four posts and the first square of 2X6 boards.

Growing Potatoes

Using seed potatoes or sprouting potatoes you can fill that first section with mulch or soil and plant the potatoes. Be sure they are covered with mulch, compost or soil and wait for them to sprout.

Once they sprout you will allow the greens to grow 6 inches or more before screwing in the next section of 2X6 boards.

Do this until you run out of boards. The foliage will grow and grow and continue to fill out at the top of your potato boxes. Eventually the plants will begin to die off. That is when you should harvest.

To harvest you can simply remove the bottom panels from your growing box and reach in to grab the potatoes at the root level.

You don't even have to dig to plant or harvest these potatoes!

CHAPTER 2: SECURITY

Security at the home and homestead is very important. For most of us security can be overlooked because we have lived in relative peace and harmony for most of our lives. However, we never get a memo from criminals.

One of the biggest mistakes the average person makes is to assume that criminals are stupid. They think they are high school dropouts who haphazardly break windows and dive into homes to steal valuables or steal cars at random.

Many criminals are professionals that will case a home or homestead for a long time before acting.

The most powerful tool in your security arsenal is the deterrent. A deterrent is designed to push a criminal away from your property and on to another without the use of force. It's a feature of your property that makes them think it would be better to look at another property.

Deterrents can be stone walls, barking dogs or even a homeowner who is always home and present. If your property is constantly occupied, then criminals will look for a property where the owner is gone most of the day.

We will discuss surveillance and deterrents in this section on DIY security.

SOLAR POWERED CAMERA SYSTEM



Having a legitimate camera system on your homestead or on your property is essential. You can learn a lot about the goings on in your area with a few strategically positioned sets of cameras. You can see who is driving up and down your street. You can also see who might be nibbling the tomatoes in your garden at night.

You can obviously purchase a solar powered camera system and just install those cameras where you need them to be. However, you can also turn your current system into a solar powered system.

You Will Need:

- Security Camera
- 144Wh Battery
- Solar Charge Controller
- Solar Power Cable

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- Solar Panel 75W/12V
- Crimp Connectors
- Battery Enclosure
- DC Jack

The Reolink RLC-410W is the model that I know. It comes with several power input options. This is a great camera to start this project with. It gives you options.

The hardware we have included will give you everything you need to make this project work. You may have to modify things like your solar panels or the power of your battery depending on how much sun you get in your area. You may need more solar panels or a larger battery depending on your system.

The distance between the camera and the battery will also dictate its full power capacity and you can calculate that [here](#).

This system will power one camera.

You will modify your DC Jack so that you can run wire from the jack to your solar charger. You could also buy cameras that are already designed to hook up to +/- terminals rather than into DC jacks.

Your solar charge controller is the heart of this project and all of your other components will be wired into this charger.

Connect your battery to the battery terminals of the charger. Be sure you line up the + with the + and the - with the - polarity or your system will be compromised.

Next you will connect the solar panels, using the power cable to the positive and negative sides of the solar panel terminals. Upon connection, if you are outside, you will see a charging symbol right away.

Finally, you will find the load terminals on your charger and connect the camera to these +/- terminals appropriately. I know that solar panels and wiring can get complicated. It might even seem intimidating. The best thing you can do is buy the components and start playing with them.

Be safe and use caution when dealing with solar power but get in there and play around with your charger and your panels. Once you understand how they work to charge a battery, anything becomes possible.

REPURPOSED TRAIL CAM SYSTEM



This is an amazingly simple concept for those who might be terrified of the solar powered camera project above. This is a simple option for setting up some hidden security cameras on your property.

In some instances, a nice white camera can make for a perfect deterrent. When a bad guy sees that camera hanging near your door and near a floodlight, they may pass over your property.

However, you can learn a lot about your area when you have cameras placed that most people cannot see

The top 5 locations to place security cameras are as follows:

- Front Door
- Living Room Window
- Back Door

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- Garage Door
- Basement Door

If you are repurposing trail cameras than you can truly hide these cameras and stage them further from home than most traditional camera systems.

- Top of Driveway
- Nearest Main Roads
- Woods Edge
- Popular Trails Surrounding Home
- Areas of Complaint or Concern by Neighbors

With a trail camera security system, you are going to use motion to capture those who might be scouting your home. The further out you go the better. Perhaps you can identify people scouting your neighborhood in general.

While the big white cameras on your home do a great job, you will gain more knowledge about the true threats in your area from these well-hidden and strategically placed trail cameras.

MOUNTING A GoPro ON A “SECURITY GOAT”



Chances are your homestead has a lot of wide-open space. Much of that space might be rarely visited by anyone in your home. While security may not be your highest priority it should be somewhere on the list.

Security doesn't have to be from outside intruders it could be to gather intel on what's been tearing up your fences or eating your vegetable garden.

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A goat goes where you cannot or will not and the security goat could be the perfect ally in the battle to secure your property both from trespassers and invasive or damaging creatures.

For this project you will need:

- Large GoPro Dog Harness
- Go Pro Camera
- Patience!

The toughest part about this is finding the right goat that will cooperate with your mission. This could take some time but the best place to start is by putting your harness on one of your goats. Don't worry about the camera, just put the harness on them.

The harnesses are easy to find online, though the bulk of these types of doggy GoPros are available on eBay.

Give them a few days to acclimate to the harness. Take it off each day and put it back on the next day. They must be trained, a bit, to deal with wearing it. You will have goats that deal with it and you will have goats that hate it.

Obviously, the goats that hate the harness are not the right goats for your security needs. However, you will find a winner.

After a couple days of training you can add the affix the GoPro to the harness and try a day recording some footage. Make sure the goat doesn't knock the thing off or another goat doesn't try and eat it!

If you reach this point and find that your new security goat is cooperating, well, you got something. Now you can start sending him on missions.

You can either allow your goats to freely roam the property and gather intel that way or, if you know of a specific issue, drive or walk your goats to a certain location. The areas that are near roads and paths are great places to post up your new security goat.

CHAPTER 3: KITCHEN

The kitchen used to be a place where most of the day was spent. Families spent time working together in kitchens. Three meals a day were cooked in that kitchen. Learning was done in that kitchen. In modern homes we hardly spend any time in our kitchens.

In the kitchen you are going to be able to affect all sorts of things. How you feed your family, how you clean your home and how you deal with pests all comes from the kitchen. It's the hub of good hygiene and health.

You can make a few changes in the kitchen that will radically affect your life. We have some great projects that are easy to execute on a budget.

PICTURE FRAME DRYING RACK



The act of drying is a simple and passive act of preservation. Whether you are drying herbs, vegetables or seeds, these frames will change the way you handle foods in your kitchen. They will also eliminate some of your food waste

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Direct a fan on at or under these racks and you can expedite the drying process.

For this project you will use:

- Staple Gun
- Reused or Repurposed Picture Frames of Varying Sizes
- Window Screen
- Small Chain or String
- 20 Small Eye Hooks

From the frames you are removing all the guts and the glass. You just want to be left with just the wood or particle board frame. Do this with three frames. Ideally, different in size.

Next you will prep each frame by measuring and cutting the screen to fit each frame. Staple the screen into the frame from the bottom so the decorative part of the frame is facing up and the screen is affixed to the bottom.

Screw your small hooks into the same four places on all four frames. In other words, if you screw one at each corner of the longest sides of the frame, do that for all of them. These frames should look identical in layout even if they are different in size.

Now you are going to use your hooks to attach the chain or tie the string. Use four lengths that are about 3ft long. Attach one length each to a hook. Now evenly attach the next, smaller, frame to the chain or string above the larger one.

If your frames are all the same size don't worry about order.

On the third and final frame you are going to want to combine the chains or the string and hang your set of frames from the roof or some other fixture up high.

If you can hang these near a window that gets direct sunlight you will really have some drying power.

PALLET STOOLS



Pallet stools are quite easy to make. They are not a long-term solution in most cases, but they can be great for outdoors seating, seating around a fire pit, and the like.

If you build these, you can throw a simple cushion on top and you will have a nice little seat that could cost you little.

You Will Need:

- 2 Pallets
- 2 Inch Screws
- Hammer
- Coarse Grit Sandpaper

Refer to the How to Break Down a Pallet section first.

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This build will require 4 pallet braces or the thicker pieces of wood on the bottom of the pallet. Most have two to three braces per. These 4 braces will become the four legs of your stool. You can modify their height based on your desired stool size. The shorter the stools the sturdier they will be.

Once you have determined the height of your stool you can cut eight of your pallet slats to 22 inches. You can use these eight slats to brace the top and bottom of your pallet stool. Lay down two of your braces and drill one slat to connect the two at the bottom and one slat to connect the two at the top.

Do this for the other two braces and then use your remaining four braces to connect the two sets. Depending on your stool height you should now have the outline of a cube shape or something more rectangular.

Cut about 6 more pallet slats to 24 inches and either screw these slats into the top of your stool. This will become the seat. Start the first slat as far to one side as possible. Then add more and more slats till you get to the other side and the top of the stool is completely covered.

Throw a nice cushion on top and you are ready.

HOMEMADE ANTIBACTERIAL HAND GEL



The home and homestead can get grimy. You come in contact with all kinds of bacteria and finding solutions that are less harsh on your skin and easier for you make at home with natural ingredients is just a better way to live.

There is nothing like that feeling of self-reliance and independence.

- 8oz Aloe Vera Gel
- 8oz Witch Hazel
- 2 TSP of Liquid Vitamin E
- 30 Drops of Essential Oils (Cinnamon, Lavender, Peppermint and Sage Oil)

The beauty of this project is that you are basically going to be just adding all the ingredients to a bowl big enough to hold them and then you are going simply whisk them together and store in a mason jar or another container with a pump top.

MAKING YOUR OWN SOURDOUGH STARTER



A great sourdough starter can be kept alive and be your source of incredibly flavorful bread. The name conjures up some of your favorite bread experiences. Who doesn't love a great sourdough loaf?

Really, you are creating a bowl of water, flour and sugar that becomes a living breathing collection of yeast and yeast food! It's very simple but giving it a go is something most people never do.

Let's take a look at this simple recipe/science experiment that everyone will enjoy.

- 2 Cups of Flour
- 2 Cups of Warm Water
- 1 Packet of Dry Yeast

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● 1 TBSP of Sugar

In a large non-reactive metal bowl mix together the warm water sugar and yeast. Then add your 2 cups of flour. Mix this together thoroughly and cover loosely. Store this over a baking sheet and you will be able to avoid any overflow.

Store this mix in a warm place for about 5 days. If it's cooler than normal you might need to go as long as a week. This mixture will double or even triple in size as the natural yeast continues to feed on the flour.

After this time, it should be bubbly and have that sour but pleasant smell. If your mixture has a pink, orange or any other color look to it, well, you gotta trash the mix and start over.

Store the mixture in your fridge until you are ready to bake.

When using your starter to bake you must replace what you take. If you use 1 cup of the starter to make a bread rise or some sort of risen treat you will have to replace what you have taken with a 1 cup of water/1 cup of flour mixture. Mix the two together first and then stir the mixture into that

If you use this mixture on a regular basis, replace what you take and keep the mix refrigerated, you will have lots of success with your sourdough starter. It will add a layer of flavor and character to your baking that cannot be compared.

GLASS CLEANER



Making cleaning products can be rewarding. It's both astounding to create something you thought only Windex could pull off in a manufacturing facility. There is also a great feeling that comes from using a cleaning product that doesn't have some cancer-causing ingredients.

- 2 Cups of Water
- 2 Tablespoons of Vinegar
- 10 Drops of your Favorite Essential Oil (Lavender or Lemon are Great)
- A Labeled Spray Bottle or Mason Jar with Spray Top Attachment

Quick and easy. Put all your ingredients in a big bowl and whisk them together.

Even easier, put them all into a large mason jar and shake it up! Add the attachment or pour it into a spray bottle.

FLY SPRAY FROM HERBS AND VODKA



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Do you need another reason to keep vodka around the home or homestead? This is just the reason to make that happen. This fly spray is great for use in the yard, the coop and on the porch.

- 8oz of Water
- Two Handfuls of Fresh Herbs (basil, oregano, thyme, mint, rosemary)
- 8oz of Vodka
- Small Pot
- Mason Jar or Spray Bottle

Bring your water to a boil and add the herbs allowing them to steep until the mixture cools to room temperature. This will infuse that water with all the herby goodness. Squeeze the herbs in your hand and wring out what's left.

Pour your herb infused water into a mason jar or spray bottle and add the vodka. It's really that simple! Be sure you mark this mix as it's pretty clear and can be mistaken for a number of things from a distance.

CHAPTER 4: PANTRY

The home pantry is an essential piece of living a lifestyle of self-reliance and independence. It is here that you create a base of preparedness through food storage options. Your pantry is often home to home canned foods, dehydrated foods and fermented foods.

The pantry is also where you turn in an emergency. Here you have extra food on hand to deal with lean times in all forms. If you don't have extra food, homemade food and preserved food in the pantry then you don't have a backup plan.

We will learn about how to use natural processes to take full advantage of the items in that pantry.

MASTER FERMENTATION



Fermenting foods is an ancient process that has been used to preserve foods as far back as 6000 BC in the Fertile Crescent. In the scope of that kind of history we have just recently begun to understand the healing and medicinal benefits of fermentation.

Foods like sauerkraut, kimchi, kefir, kombucha and tempeh are all examples of fermentation at it's very best. Let's make a simple jar of kimchi for your pantry.

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You will see how easy this process is and you literally let it sit on the counter and get delicious!

- Colander
- Mason Jar and Lid
- 1 Head of Nappa Cabbage
- 1/4 Cup of Salt
- 5 Cloves of Grated Garlic
- 1 Tsp of Sugar
- 1 Tsp of Ginger
- 1 Tbsp of Fish Sauce
- 4 Tbsp of Korean Chili Flakes
- 1/2 Cup of Daikon Radish
- 4 Medium Sized Scallions

Begin cutting the cabbage into about 2-inch strips so that you can pile them into a bowl to get them salted. Toss the cabbage with the salt and then remove the cabbage into a colander and place a plate over the cabbage and some kind of weight.

You are pressing the moisture out of the cabbage and you will let this sit for a couple hours.

Rinse the salt from your cabbage and then allow it to drain for about 20 minutes.

Make your spicy paste that will be the base of flavor for the kimchi. Mix the remaining ingredients besides the radish and scallions.

Finally, add all your vegetables to the paste and mix thoroughly. Spoon these ingredients into a 1-quart mason jar or multiple jars if you have extra. Place the lid on your jar and let this ferment for 3 days outside on the counter. It will bubble and you will need to loosen the jar lid to ease the pressure.

At this point you can refrigerate the kimchi and eat it when you are ready. Kimchi is delicious, spicy and a great condiment or great to eat on its own.

CAPTURE YEAST FROM THE AIR



Yeast is a naturally occurring bacteria in the air all around us. We buy it in small packets so that we can use it at will, but the reality is, we can grab it from the air anytime we want. The process is easy and what we will do is basically provide a food source and desirable environment for the yeast to move in.

Using a couple potatoes, we will create our own little yeast farm and you can forget about buying yeast in packets.

You Will Need:

- Sauce Pot
- Bowl
- Two Potatoes
- 1/4 Cup of Sugar
- 2 TSP of Salt

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Bring 3 cups of water to a rolling boil. Add two potatoes cut into quarters and boil for 30 minutes.

Remove the potatoes from the water (keep the water) and let them cool off completely. Mash the potatoes in a bowl with the sugar and salt. Use 1 cup of your warm cooking water, too! That has a lot of starch in it and is great for catching yeast.

Cover the bowl with a lid or some foil and place in a dark place for 2 days. After 2 days you can use the yeast. It will require scooping from the mashed mixture. There will be a bit of a sour smell but if the mix has become green or orange or any other strange color or if the mix is molding, you need to start over.

TIP: 2 TBSP of potatoes yeast = 1 TBSP of store-bought yeast

CRAFT YOUR OWN BEER



Brewing

You Will Need:

- 10 Gallon Food Grade Plastic Bucket
- Siphon Hose, Food Grade, 74 inch
- Siphon Hose Clamp
- 12 2 Liter Plastic Soda Bottles with Lids

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- Hydrometer
- 2 40oz Cans of Malt Extract
- 1 Tsp of Brewer's Yeast
- 6-7 Cups of White Sugar

When it comes to brewing your first and most important step should be to sanitize all your equipment. It should be washed in soapy water and then allowed to sanitize in a bleach solution.

Take your time here as this makes your brew a safe one.

Pour 10 liters of water into your plastic pail

In your largest pot bring 7 liters of water to a boil. Add one can of malt extract and cook uncovered for 20 minutes. Add your sugar and stir it into the mix to dissolve. Once you have dissolved the sugar you should then dump the mix into your pail.

Some people say to splash the mixture into the pail to aerate the mixture. This will help the yeast become highly active.

Brewing

Top off the bucket. Add the yeast and stir. Place your lid on the pail but keep it loose so the carbon dioxide can be slowly released. If your lid is too tight it will explode.

Let the mix sit for 7 days under the steps or somewhere, indoors, where it can maintain consistent temperature. At this point you can use your hydrometer and feel like a real scientist. Your reading should be a 1.010 for as an average. Lower for dark beers and higher for light beers.

Time to Bottle

Set the pail on a table that can handle the weight. Place your 2-liter bottles. You can place them on a towel if you are worried about spillage. Place 2 teaspoons of sugar in each bottle. You can use a funnel to do this.

Using your siphon tube, place it deep into the 2-liter bottle, then siphon your brew into each bottle. You want the tube deep in the bottle to avoid frothing. Leave space for air at the top of the bottle. Tighten your lid very tight.

Flip the bottle upside down to assure the sugar dissolves. Continue with the rest of your bottles. They can sit in the dark and be drunk within 3 days, but they will be better the longer they age.

3 HOMEMADE DRIED HERB MIXES



Drying herbs and storing them for the remainder of the year is a great process to follow. The difference in taste between dried herbs you buy and the ones you dry yourself is outstanding.

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You can bottle up some basil and some oregano and mix them into whatever you are cooking. Or you can make up some herb mixes that you might even use now but you buy them from the supermarket.

Italian Seasoning

- 2 Tbsp of Dry Basil
- 1 Tbsp of Dry Oregano
- 1 Tbsp of Dry Parsley

Herbs De Provence

- 2 Tbsp of Dry Marjoram or Oregano
- 1 Tbsp of Dry Thyme
- 1/2 Tbsp of Dry Lavender
- 1/2 Tbsp of Dry Parsley

Poultry Herb Mix

- 2 Tbsp of Dry Sage
- 2 Tbsp of Dry Rosemary
- 1 Tbsp of Dry Thyme
- 1 Tbsp of Dry Parsley

HOMEMADE APPLE CIDER VINEGAR



Apple cider vinegar is as much about good health as it is about good cooking. When you make your own unfiltered apple cider vinegar you will have that great mother and all its benefits.

Not only is apple cider vinegar easy to make but it's a great use for cores and peels.

You Will Need:

- Quart Jar
- Cheese Cloth
- Apple Scraps
- 2 Cups of Water
- 2 TBSP of Sugar

Fill your jar 3/4 of the way with apple scraps. Mix your sugar and water together in a cup and then add to the apples. Use a fermentation weight or another jar, or something to keep

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the apples under water. If the apples stick out of the water, they will mold, and your vinegar will be ruined.

Cover your jar with cheesecloth or a coffee filter and place in the pantry for 3 weeks.

After 3 weeks it should still smell slightly sweet. You will now strain the mixture into a new jar. You are going to cover it with cheesecloth again and place it back in the dark place (Pantry, Cabinet) for 3-4 more weeks.

Stir the mix every few days. After 3 weeks give it a taste. If you have the tartness you are looking for you can transfer it to a new jar with a lid and use it as needed.

CHAPTER 5: BUDGET HOMESTEAD MAINTENANCE

Whether you live on a homestead on 60 acres or on a suburban plot that is less than an acre, you will need to perform maintenance on that property. We are going to introduce you to a number of projects that will help you take care of that homestead maintenance.

From fixing bent hinges with a budget blacksmith setup to using your pallet work bench, you will be ready to deal with those little fixes that pop up all the time.

If you do not take the time to fix gates, harden security, sure up raised beds than your entire homestead will fall apart in time. It's much easier to deal with things that you need light maintenance on rather than waiting for it all to fall apart.

These projects might make that easier for you.

BUDGET BLACKSMITHING SETUP



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So why would you want a blacksmithing setup? What if you don't wanna make knives?

While knife making is one of the more popular aspects of blacksmithing, there are a myriad of projects you can undertake when you start manipulating heated metal.

Hooks, locks, hinges, awls and decorative work can all be done with a simple budget blacksmithing setup. Most people don't take up blacksmithing because they are concerned about the price of things like anvils and forges. Anvils are usually priced around \$400 dollars and up!

If you want to get started blacksmithing you are going to need four items, at least!

- Forge
- Anvil
- Hammer
- Tongs

Together these items can carry a serious price tag. If you know how to hack these tools and seek out affordable ones, it can make a huge difference.'

ANVIL

On eBay you can find people who are selling anvils made from cuts of railroad track. These can be great options and incredibly affordable. They will not have a horn or the bells and whistles of a professional anvil but, again, we are talking about a budget starter blacksmithing setup.

HAMMER

I have used a regular hammer to draw out hot metal. I also bought a 5lb handheld sledgehammer on clearance to hammer out metal, too!

TONGS

You can make your tongs once you get some practice under your belt. You can buy an expensive pair of tongs that are made for blacksmiths or you can grab that pair of channel locks you probably already have.

FORGE

You can buy a small knife making propane forge for a little over \$100. These can be had on Amazon and will hold things like rebar and small metal pieces. It's a great starter piece.

You will need a place to work. You can build a simple square table using 2X4s and affix your anvil to this table. I have done it this way and have since hung a bunch of hooks that I created in my forge to hang tools.

Blacksmithing is an incredible skill that is as beneficial and practical as it is entertaining. It's great for stoking the creative fire inside of you.

RESTORE WOODEN FURNITURE



In this age of hyper consumerism, we prefer throwing things in the garbage to fixing them. This makes restored wood and wooden furniture an absolute treat to see on display. A room of old restored wood furniture cannot be bought. This is particularly true if you are

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You Will Need:

- Surface Cleaner
- Sandpaper of Varying Grits
- Brush or Tack Cloth
- Mineral Turp
- Furniture Oil
- Varnish

STRIP

Old furniture is usually dirty from grit, grease and grime. The first step is to use a reliable surface cleaner to clean the whole piece of furniture up. The amount of time this takes will depend on how dirty the furniture is.

Once you have a nice clean piece of furniture you will be able to start sanding all surfaces. These surfaces, if more intricate, could involve more careful sanding. Start with a coarser grit sandpaper and as you get down to the surface use something finer.

CLEAN

Wipe away the dust from sanding with a brush or tack cloth. Be very thorough here. You need a clean surface before adding turpentine. A toothbrush can be a great ally for loosening dust from small areas. It can also be great during the stripping and cleaning phase.

REFINISH

Either outside or in a well-ventilated room, with a mask, you can add your turpentine to all the surfaces. Allow this to sit and you will get a look at the natural wood finish. You can take further steps from here or you might just want to add some furniture oil to enhance and further preserve the natural wood look.

Be sure to apply your oil with the grain of the wood. Always go with the grain of the wood.

If you want to modify the color and look of your restored furniture you can use a varnish or stain on the wood. This could take several coats to achieve the look you are after. Be sure you also go with the grain when applying varnish.

Be careful with this restoration business. It can get pretty addicting!

PALLET WORKBENCH



This is a simple workbench that is surprisingly durable and is something I use on a regular basis. I have a miter saw, tool chest and some simple blacksmithing materials that I store on mine and it has been a sturdy asset for years.

- 4 4x4 posts 4 feet tall.
- 2 2X4s 3 feet long
- 2 2X4s 6 feet long
- 2 2X4s cut 32 inches long
- A pile of boards harvested from pallet

This build is quite simple but very effective and as I mentioned I have built and repaired all kinds of things on my pallet workbench. It was a build of necessity because I, maybe like you, assumed I didn't need a work bench. Till I built one.

The simple frame of the workbench starts by screwing your 3-foot 2x4s to two of the posts.

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Using 2 1/2-inch screws lay 2 4x4s on the so they line up with the edges of the 2x4 and drill through the 2x4 into the 4x4s. Do this with both of your 2x4s and the other 2 4x4s.

Now connect the frame ends using the 6-foot 2x4s and you should have what looks like the frame of a workbench.

Using a rubber mallet fit the 32-inch cuts of 2x4 evenly into the frame of your bench. They should fit snugly against either side of the frame and will brace the center of the bench. These will also provide a place for the pallet boards to be drill into and be supported.

You may need to cut the pallet boards down a bit, but you can start screwing them down in widthwise sections. You are almost going to shingle the top of the work bench; however, you can sand the bench when it's finished to create a relatively smooth surface.

Cut your boards to fit and drill them all down to cover the length of your workbench frame. Once the bench is covered in pallet board, as a tabletop, your build is complete.

BUDGET FENCING



Fencing is an important part of gardening and managing animals. Even just the management of a yard in general.

2X4 and Cinder Block

You may or may not have seen this design at your local hardware store but you can make a very simple and budget friendly fence by stacking a couple cinder blocks on each other and so that the holes line up and then running 2X4 the desired length.

Push the wood through the holes in the top and bottom cinderblocks and you will have a very simple but budget friendly fencing system.

This is not adequate for keeping small animals contained. However, it is a great means of dividing up spaces or keeping larger animals in certain areas. It is most often used as a temporary fence, but you can use a little mortar to sure up the cinderblocks to add some more stability.

Light Frame and Chicken Wire

With some cheap green posts, a roll of wire and a basic wood frame you can create a great space for chickens, rabbits or other small animals to be contained in. This fencing is very affordable and can often be made with scrap wood you have laying around. The posts and the rolls of chicken wire are easy to come by and not that expensive.

This is also a great fencing option for your garden, too! It can easily keep deer and rabbits from munching down on your new plants.

Natural Fencing

While it might take a little more time to consider and create, natural fencing can be very effective on your property and it can be virtually FREE!

Natural fencing can be made from things like:

- Canes
- Branches
- Small Trees
- Hay Bales
- Brambles (my favorite)

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Who can beat a pokey fence that grows fruit! That is why I love strategically placed brambles as fencing. You can help this kind of fencing along by simply adding a row of our chicken wire mentioned above and threading brambles through that fence. This will create a natural wall of thorns and berries.

Hay Bales can be lashed together, and canes can be weaved horizontally between vertical poles. You can even lean smaller trees against one another to create a simple yet effective fence for larger animals.

There are plenty of options out there for natural fencing; it just takes access to the resource and some imagination and determination.

CHAPTER 6: CRAFTS AND FIBERS

Even keeping a small suburban homestead can be a lot of work. On top of your actual job, raising a family and fitting in some hobbies, we can forget all about enjoying ourselves.

Entertainment has reached a point of hyper stimulation. We were all capable of passing the time, having fun and enjoying each other LONG before Netflix. This chapter will be all about crafting and creating.

You probably never imagined making a corn husk doll but it's actually quite the way to pass an afternoon. Making candles and soaps are not just fun crafts to make, they can even generate income!

Find your hidden passion in this chapter.

DIY CD DROP SPINDLE



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- 3/8 Inch Dowel Rod cut 12 inches long
- 2 Old CDs
- 3/4 Inch Brass Hook
- 3/8 Inch O Ring
- 5/8inch outer; 3/8 Inch inner Rubber Grommet

Sand the dowel a bit to smooth it off. Just a little or else your grommet won't fit. Just remove any snags for your yarn.

Place the silver sides together. push the grommet into the center of the CDs and this will hold them together.

Now you can place the dowel through the grommet. Slip the dowel 1/4 of the way through the grommet. So now you should have a noticeably larger section of the dowel on one side of the CD and a shorter section on the other side. The short side will be the top of the spindle.

Now slip the o ring over the longest part of the dowel right up against the grommet to hold it in place.

Screw your brass hook onto the shorter end of the spindle or the top. Screw it in flush.

You can tie on a leader of about 12 inches of yarn if you are interested in preparing to process your roving.

QUICK AND EASY ROLLED BEESWAX CANDLES



Candle making presents many more options than you might think. You can make these candles in a few minutes. If you enjoy making and burning these simple candles than you can certainly move on to some of the more complex recipes for candle making.

The wax and wicks can be purchased at most local craft stores.

You Will Need:

- Sheets of Beeswax
- Wicks
- Scissors
- Hair Dryer

Cut your beeswax sheets in half by folding them first to create a crease and then cutting with a knife.

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Cut a wick that is about 2 inches longer than the wax sheet. This will assure you have plenty of wick to light. Now lay your wick on one edge of the beeswax sheet.

Take your time and start rolling the wax sheet tightly. This will require that you roll a little at a time. Take your time with each roll and make sure it's nice and tight. The tighter the roll the sturdier your candle will be.

When you have completely rolled your sheet, you can seal the candle just by using your own body heat from a fingertip or by hitting the edge of the wax sheet with your blow dryer. If you have trouble rolling the sheet you can also use the blow dry to warm the sheets.

Just be careful as it can melt too much quickly.

Trim the wick at the bottom and then cut your wick to about 1/2 an inch and you are ready to burn the candle.

Make a few and you will get better at rolling them tight, as you go.

DIY SOAP MAKING



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Soap making was taken over by big corporations but over the last 5-10 years it has been grappled back by artisans. Now, you can find small soap makers at farmers markets all over the nation.

There is nothing quite like a bar of homemade lavender soap to start your day. You can make your own but the process requires you to use a caustic mixture that can be dangerous so you must be careful.

You Will Need:

- 6.9 ounces of Lye
- 2 Cups Distill Water, Cold
- 2 Cups of Canola Oil
- 2 Cups of Coconut Oil
- 2 Cups of Palm Oil
- Goggles, Gloves, Masks for safety
- Soap Mold
- Plastic or Wax Paper
- Glass Bowl
- Wooden Spoon
- 2 Thermometers
- Stainless Steel Pot
- Stick Blender

With all your safety gear on you can start the process. Do this in a well-ventilated room or outdoors.

Line your mold, which can be anything you want to pour the warm soap to set into. Use your wax paper or plastic wrap.

Slowly add the lye to the cold, distilled water in a glass bowl. Never add the water to the lye. Mix thoroughly for about 60 seconds. You will see the lye dissolve completely and the

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chemical reaction will cause the water to heat up quickly. Stick your thermometer in the mixture and allow it to cool to 110 degrees.

While the lye is cooling add all your oils to a pot and melt them slowly together. Place your second thermometer in the pot and allow that mixture to cool to 110 degrees also.

Slowly mix the two together and use a stick blender to get them thoroughly combined. This could take 30 minutes, but you really want the mix to be thorough. The mixture must trace or have a thickened consistency like a thin yogurt or pudding.

Once your mixture has traced you can pour it into the mold and allow it to set. As the mixture hardens a bit, but not completely, you can cut it into bars. Let the bars sit for 2-3 days and then remove them. Set them on some cardboard or a brown bag and allow to cure in a dark area for 3-4 weeks and they will be ready to use.

TIP: Add essential oils, soap dyes, herbs, and textured natural ingredients to enhance your soap.

GRAPEVINE WREATHS



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These are incredibly simple to make, and you can find grapevine climbing all over the woods, if you know what you are looking for. It's best to make the wreaths fresh cut and not sit on your grapevines for too long.

We are going to discuss making the base of the wreath, but the true beauty of any wreath comes from the creative genius of the person who decorates it.

You Will Need:

- Grape Vines
- Dried fruits, flowers, leaves, natural decorations
- Florist Tape

Cut yourself a bunch of length of the vine and remove the leaves. Keep the tendrils on the vines as they help grab and hold your decorations.

Create your first circle in your wreath using the thickest end of your vine. Start by forming a circle that is about the size of the wreath you want. Make another coil the same size, with the vine you are using. With whatever length is left begin winding around that circle and stuff the tendrils to secure it and use some florist tape to make sure the first coils don't come undone.

Add the rest of your vines, winding and tucking or taping until you get your desired shape to decorate. Remember, your wreath will be much bigger than the vine base once you add decorations.

All your decorations should have stems or something that can be tucked because you will tuck and tape them into place.

Here are some great natural decorations to consider:

- Baby's Breath
- Bells of Ireland
- Foxglove
- Amaranth
- Goldenrod
- Heather

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- Hydrangea
- Yarrow
- Pampas Grass
- Plume Grass
- Wheat Grass
- Switchgrass
- Lavender
- Lemongrass
- Rosemary
- Fennel
- Sage
- Thyme

DYING WOOL OR FABRIC



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This is an ancient process that has followed us for an awfully long time. The dying of fabrics can be done naturally and though this process has been dominated by big industry.

To dye fabrics, you must understand MORDANT a mordant is used to keep the dye set. This means it will not wash out when you clean the fabric. This is a necessary step and will make all the difference in the quality of the dye job.

You Will Need:

- 1lb of Wool or Fabric
- 1oz Alum (aluminum potassium sulfate)
- Detergent
- Natural Dyes

Begin by washing your material to be dyed in detergent. This process should be started when you are going to dye your fabric. Do not do this ahead of time as the whole process works best as Yellows a wet process from start to finish.

While your wool or fabric is soaking in the detergent prepare your mordant. While this might sound complex you are just going to take the Alum and add it to one gallon of water into a pot that is large enough to hold your materials.

After the fabric has been washed thoroughly you will simmer it in the mordant for 1 hour. At this point it will be ready to be dyed.

Creating Dyes

By crushing, chopping or mashing up certain materials and placing those materials in a cheese cloth bundle you will have a safe sack of dyestuff to help achieve the desired color. To put it simply, you are creating a “tea bag” of materials to dye your cloth. Let’s look at some colors.

Reds - Madder Root, Butterfly Weed, Powder from Cochineal Insects

Yellows - Goldenrod, Onion Skins, Marigolds

Greens - Lily Leaves, Queen Anne’s Lace Flowers

Blue - Indigo is used to create blues but must be prepared first because it is not water soluble. You will need

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- 1oz washing soda (sodium carbonate)
- 1oz of hydrosulfite
- 1 teaspoon of Indigo paste

Mix it all into 2 quarts of water and bring to a boil. You are supposed to bring this mixture to 350 degrees and let it stand for 20 minutes. Shake another ounce of hydrosulfite into it and the bath will be ready. It will have a greenish yellow tint to it but once the dyed material is exposed to the air it will turn blue.

Preparing the Dyebath

To a large pot you are going to add your dyestuff, wrapped in cheese cloth, cover it with water and boil until the water is richly colored.

Remove the bundle and add enough cold water to make four gallons in total. Add your materials to be died and slowly bring to a simmer. The slower the better as materials don't like quick changes in temperature.

Simmer until you get the desired color. Plant materials like cotton will take longer than animal materials to dye.

CORN HUSK DOLLS

While they are a bit antiquated there is still something special about making corn husk dolls. You don't need to grow fields of corn to make this happen. You can use the husks from the sweet corn you buy at the supermarket.

These are an incredibly unique decoration for the home and can be made with kids.

You Will Need:

- Corn Husks
- String
- Markers

Start with soft white husks that are closest to the ear of corn. Remove the silk.

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Place the stiff ends of four husks on top of one another. Bunch together these stiff ends and then tie your first Tie this off on both ends to create both arms. You can use scissors to cut “fingers” at the ends of either arm.

Spread the dress and look for the middle section. You are going to slide the arms up under the dress and up close to the head of the doll. Hold the arms in place and then tie them off with a

length of string wrapped just below them, around the body. This should give you the appearance of a head arms and body.

You can trim the dress and have a simple doll with a dress, or you can cut down the middle of the dress and bunch the husks together to make two legs. These will need to be tied off with string.

Use markers and scraps of cloth or other natural materials to make costumes for your dolls.



Chapter 7: Outdoor Projects

One of the most wonderful things about living on a homestead or having a yard is getting outside and watching the world happen. This could be sunrise, sunset or even just watching the big white clouds roll by on a warm day.

We have a collection of DIY projects that will help you both get outside more and enjoy the life of self-reliance and independence.

From smoking your own meat outdoors to playing with your kids, getting out into the fresh air is vital. It clears the mind and offers up a better chance at getting that physical activity we all need more of.

BUDGET SMOKEHOUSE



A smokehouse is a powerful tool for preserving food and cooking food. A simple smokehouse, like this one, is a pretty easy build as long as you have some power tools.

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You will have to decide how to smoke inside of this smokehouse. This is the standalone structure and you can add propane fueled fire for adding wood and smoking or you can pipe in a wood stove. That decision is yours.

- 11-2×3's
- Gate set
- 4 bags of concrete
- 8 cinder blocks
- 8 rough cut 1×6's
- 1- 12ft 2×4
- 1- 2ft piece of flashing
- 2- 10ft pieces of flashing
- 3/4" sheet metal screws
- 2-8 ft. 2×6's

In a nice shady location, you should begin laying the cinder blocks as the foundation of your smokehouse. Choose a shady location so you can best control the temperature over time.

Lay the blocks three long on either side with two between, to create a rectangle with a large opening in the center. This will create a 4' X 2' smokehouse. Smaller the better because you will not waste smoke in a wide-open space.

Now you are going to use the 2X4s and the 2X3s to frame your smokehouse.

Start by cutting your 2X4s to fit the cinder blocks. Measure your blocks and cut the lumber to match up each side. You should have 2 2' sections and 2 4' sections.

Next do the same with your 2X3s and attach them to your 2X4 frame. From here you can cut more 2X3s to frame the cabinet of the smokehouse. 3ft sections are plenty large for this smokehouse. However, you can make it bigger if you'd like. Cut 4 3' sections and then duplicate your 4' by 2' base for the top of your cabinet. At this point your build will feel pretty flimsy but we are going to add to stabilize it later.

Using your 2x6s you cut two 2' sections that can be drilled to your 2x3s at the top of your frame. You will build your peak for the roof on these. Cut two 45-degree angles into 4 pieces

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of 2X6 in the peak you desire. You are likely going to do 2' to 30 inches. Attach the roof sections and then use some 2X6s to brace this roof section.

To finish the roof, you are going to use the corrugated flash to cover the top. You can nail or screw this in. Just be sure there is a little overhang to protect your smokehouse.

Using either 2X6s or free pallet wood you can begin lining the frame on the outside with planks on three sides. Be sure that you apply these planks all the way to the top of the roof peak. They will need to be cut once you get up that high.

You could also shingle the wood if you like that look better.

Keep one open for your door. You could use metal flashing on the inside of the smokehouse, too. Or even thin sheet metal. Of course, that would increase the cost by a lot.

Once your frame is covered on all sides with planks you are going to fill the bottom with quick curing cement. Mix the bags in a wheelbarrow to get the right consistency and then fill the center opening and all the holes in your cinder blocks.

While that is drying you can build your door. Measure your doorway and cut the wood to size. You can use scraps and pallet wood for this part. Once you have cut the lumber you can use 2x4's to drill the lumber to. These can be two straight cuts of 2x4 that are as wide as the door. Keep it simple.

Once your concrete is totally dry, use the gate kit to hang your door. At this point your smokehouse is ready to go.

STRAW BALE ARCHERY TARGET

Whether you shoot a recurve, long or compound bow you understand the benefits of archery. Sure, you can use archery to procure food but the practice of shooting arrows into targets is one of the more relaxing things you can do.

You become focused only on mechanics and the target beyond. A simple straw bale archery target is incredibly easy and could be free if you know where to get some free bales.

- 1 Pallet
- 2-4 Straw Bales
- Red Spray Pain

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The pallet will be the base of your straw bale. You can use it to keep space between your bales and the ground below them. Moisture will make the bales start to grow things and rot, so you want to extend the life of the straw bales as much as possible. Keep them covered in rain and keep them in the sun.

Find a location that gives you up to 30 yards of distance to shoot from, at least. This location should also have some clearing beyond it. If your arrow passes through the bale or if you miss it altogether you will want to be able to find those arrows.

Clear the ground for your pallet and place it down on a flat area. You could even put some sand down first but it's not necessary. m

If you only have 2 bales stack them in the center of the pallet. You can twine them together if you'd like but I have never toppled them from shooting. If you have smaller bales you may want to create a 4-bale stack with 2 on bottom and two on top.

You can either free had a nice big bullseye on the target or create a few concentric circles as your target.

If you don't have spray paint you can also hand paper targets on your bales using bamboo skewers.

Using a pallet and a few bales you will have hours of fun.



BUILDING AND BRACING A TREE HOUSE PLATFORM FRAME

The tree house is a hideaway for children and a place to have things like secret clubs. It's also a great base of operations from which nerf war can be initiated. These are fun and simple to build but you must brace your tree house appropriately.

Safety should be your number one concern when it comes to building a treehouse as falling from such a height can be incredibly dangerous.

Choose a strong, live tree with at least a 12-inch diameter. You will need that size of a tree to be effective for your tree house. Pay attention to what is around your tree also. You want it to be a safe area where those who enjoy the playhouse will not be threatened by environmental hazards or other hazards.

Understanding Bracers

We are going to talk about building braces onto a single tree house first. This is incredibly important and will become the base of the entire structure.

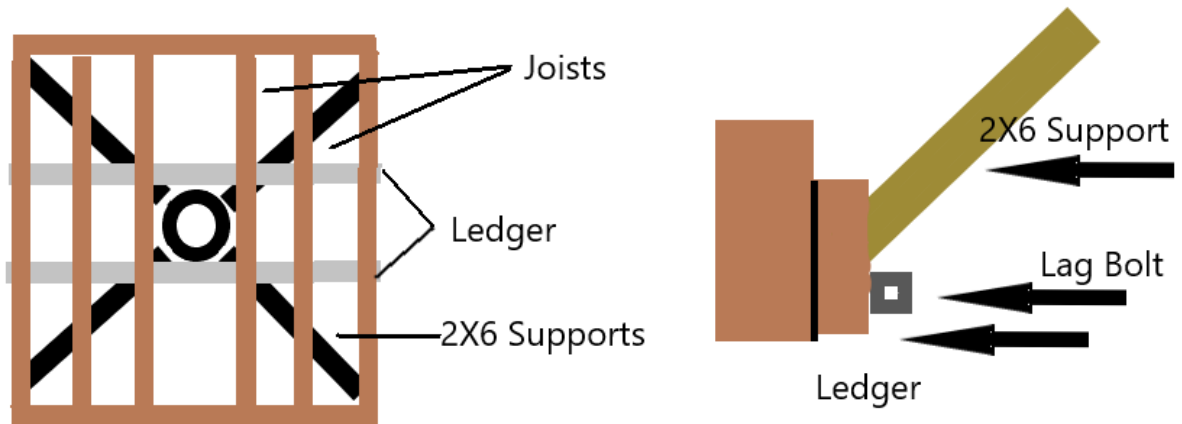
Start with two 8-foot ledger boards on either side of the tree. These will be 2x4s that you will lag bolt into the tree. These could be braced on the bottom by two more 2x4s cut at 45-degree angles and brought together in a V shape beneath each ledger board. These two could be bolted to the tree. At this point you will have some serious stability on which you can build your frame. 2 x4s on each end.

Run 6 2x4 joists perpendicular to the 8-foot ledgers. These should be framed by two more 4 2x6 supports can be cut at a 45-degree angle and used to support the outside of the frame. While a platform frame like the one pictured below you will be able to confidently frame out whatever kind of tree house you would like.

At this point you can create a traditional A frame style tree house and add to that anything you like. Or you can use this braced platform to go another direction completely. Just know you have a structure beneath your feet that is sound.

The tree house is a project that should involve others. It's a creative process where you and your kids get to discuss things like ladders, climbing ropes, siding, windows, chimneys, hopes and dreams for this magical place.

Diagrams



DOGHOUSE

Fido should be comfortable at home, too! That backyard is the perfect place to build a lightweight doghouse. The traditional doghouse is fun but what about a sheet metal doghouse to add something a little unique to your backyard. These are easier to move around and nice to look at.

You Will Need:

- Drill
- Miter Saw
- Drill Press
- Metal Cutter
- Metal Snips
- Marking Tool (Sharpie)
- Impact Driver (to drive screws in
- 4 - 12 foot 2" x 2" wooden boards
- 6- 32" x 24" metal siding
- Self-Tapping Wood screws (2")

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- Sheet Metal screws
- Dog Door (I used a heavy rubber mud flap)
- 2 - 2" brass hinges (with attaching screws)
- 11 feet of metal cornering

The first step here is to cut your lumber to size. You will use your lumber to frame out the doghouse and that will be covered in the sheet metal.

- 32 inches - 4 pieces
- 24 inches - 12 pieces
- 22.5 inches - 3 pieces
- 10 inches - 3 pieces

Using 2 of the 32-inch pieces of lumber you are going to lay 3 of the pieces of 24 inch inside. They should be spaced equally. Do this two times and you will have two walls. Use the 24-inch pieces to connect the top, bottom and side walls together. Now you should have a structure with four walls like this and two open ends that will be the front door, and the back wall.

Now you are going to move on to the roofing. Start by creating your roof angles by screwing a butted up 22.5-inch piece of lumber to a 24-inch piece of lumber. Make three of these. Use your 10-inch sections to brace each.

Now screw the roof sections to the main structure.

At this point you are going to start placing your metal siding. Here is a simple guide for the sizes you will need:

- 27 x 32 inches - 2 (side panels)
- 27 x 40 inches - 2 (front panels)
- 36 x 28 inches - 2 (roof panels)
- 27-inch cornering pieces - 4 (corners)
- 36-inch cornering pieces - 1 (roof)

Attach these as follows and you are nearly done.

Finally attach your hinges and the mud flap to your main opening and you will have your doghouse with a doggy door.

FIRE PIT



A simple fire pit can make a huge difference in terms of how much outside time you spend with the family. There is something beautiful about outside time. It sort of releases some pressure from the techno driven lives we live.

You Will Need:

- Shovel
- Post Hole Digger
- 60 12x4 Retaining Wall Blocks (Designed for Heat)
- 1 Bag of Drainage Rocks
- 1 Bag of Lava Rocks
- 6 Seats (I like wood stumps cut that year)

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Build your first circular layer of wall blocks in the area you want your fire pit to be. This should be a full circle of bricks to give you a guide.

Dig a trench around these blocks that is about 2 inches deep or half the size of the blocks. Remove the blocks and continue to dig out the area completely creating a full-sized hole to assemble your fire pit in.

Lay a small layer of your drainage rocks beneath the first layer of wall blocks that you place down. You can stagger your next layer of bricks to get a nice design. Continue until you are out of blocks and the fire pit is built.

At this point you can use your post hole digger to create a 20" hole at the center of the fire pit. Fill that hole with drainage rocks.

Fill the bottom of your fire pit with lava rocks and you will be ready to burn!